

Message Text

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 01 YAOUND 01949 050907Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OPIC-03 COME-00 AID-05 CIAE-00

EB-07 FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00

XMB-02 SP-02 LAB-04 EPG-02 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05

SS-15 STR-04 CEA-01 PRS-01 DODE-00 L-03 H-01

PM-04 /088 W

-----060145Z 011987 /72

R 050818Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1854

INFO AMCONSUL DOUALA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE YAOUNDE 1949

DEPT PASS OPIC, USDOC

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, BGEN, CM

SUBJ: DINNER CONVERSATION AT AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE

REF: YAOUNDE 1899

1. AT DINNER GIVEN BY AMBASSADOR APRIL 29, ECONOFF SAT AT THE TABLE WITH CHRISTIAN BONGWA, MINISTER AT THE PRESIDENCY IN CHARGE OF RELATIONS WITH THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (WHOSE NAME WAS INADVERTENTLY OMITTED FROM REFTEL); EDOUARD NOMO, DIRECTOR OF INDUSTRY, MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND PLAN; AND GUSTAV TCHETGEN, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL INVESTMENT COMPANY (SNI). THE CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE CAMEROONIANS CONCERNED A PROBLEM WHICH HAD ARISEN WITH THE FOREIGN GROUP RUNNING THE CELLUCAM PROJECT. IN EFFECT, MINISTER BONGWA GAVE A LECTURE TO THE TWO OTHER OFFICIALS ON HOW THEIR GOVERNMENT OPERATED AND WHAT THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES WERE. HE REMINDED MR. NOMO THAT THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND PLAN WROTE THE BILLS ESTABLISHING CORPORATIONS UNDER THE INVESTMENT CODE, THEIR PRIVILEGES, THEIR

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 02 YAOUND 01949 050907Z

OBLIGATIONS, AND THE SCOPE OF THEIR ACTIVITIES. IT WAS MINISTER BONGWA'S JOB TO OBTAIN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY APPROVAL AND WHILE HE AND THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY COULD SUMMON APPROPRIATE MINISTRY OFFICIALS TO TESTIFY CONCERNING PROPOSED BILLS, THEY RELIED ON THE MINISTRY OFFICIALS TO KNOW WHAT THEY WERE DOING. MR. TCHTEGEN AND THE SNI, AS THE GOVERNMENT'S INVESTMENT ARM, HAD TO LIVE WITH THE RESULTS OF THEIR WORK IN DEALING WITH THE

FOREIGN INVESTORS AFTER THE LEGISLATION WAS PASSED.

2. THE POINT OF THE MINISTER'S LECTURE WAS THAT WITH WELL DRAWN LEGISLATION, THE MINISTRY AND THE SNI COULD CONTROL ACTIVITIES OF THE FOREIGN INVESTOR AND A NEW CORPORATION. BUT IT WAS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH A BASIS IN LAW FOR WHATEVER TYPE OF CONTROLS THEY WISHED TO HAVE. SECONDLY, IT WAS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY THAT THEY KNOW AND UNDERSTAND EXISTING LAW APPLICABLE TO THE TYPE OF PROJECT WITH WHICH THEY WERE DEALING. THIRD, THEY HAD TO COORDINATE WITH EACH OTHER AS TO WHAT THEIR OBJECTIVES WERE AND WITH HIS OFFICE AS TO HOW TO ATTAIN THEM. MINISTER BONGWA POINTED OUT THAT NEITHER HE NOR HIS OFFICE WAS GOING TO CHASE THEM DOWN TO DISCUSS THE BACKGROUND OF EACH BILL THAT WAS SUBMITTED. IF THEY NEEDED INFORMATION OR HAD QUESTIONS, HE WAS AVAILABLE FOR ASSISTANCE; BUT THE INITIATIVE WAS THEIRS.

3. DURING THE CONVERSATION IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT THE FOREIGN INVESTOR HAD SUCCESSFULLY PLAYED ON THE LACK OF COORDINATION BETWEEN THE SNI, THE DIRECTION OF INDUSTRY (MINISTRY OF ECONOMY AND PLAN) AND THE DIRECTION OF WATER AND FORESTS (MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE) TO OBTAIN CERTAIN PRIVILEGES WHICH THE DIRECTION OF INDUSTRY HAD NOT INTENDED AND WHICH WAS NOW CAUSING THE SNI PROBLEMS. IT WAS NOT UNTIL MIN. BONGWA CITED CHAPTER AND VERSE OF CAMEROONIAN LAW TO NOMO AND TCHETGEN THAT THE SITUATION BECAME FULLY APPARENT. NEITHER THE SNI NOR THE DIRECTION OF INDUSTRY HAD FULLY UNDERSTOOD THE RAMIFICATIONS OF THE RELEVANT LEGISLATION. THE MINISTER EXPLAINED IT QUITE CLEARLY.

4. COMMENT: THE CONVERSATION WAS INTERESTING FOR SEVERAL REASONS.
LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

PAGE 03 YAOUND 01949 050907Z

FIRST, IT UNDERScoreD THE CAMEROONIAN GOVERNMENT'S RESPECT FOR AND FIDELITY TO THE LAW. MIN. BONGWA REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES THE NEED TO ESTABLISH A BASIS IN LAW FOR WHATEVER THEY WISHED TO DO. SECOND, IT ALSO UNDERScoreD THE LACK OF COORDINATION AMONG BRANCHES OF THE GOVERNMENT - A FACT WE HAVE LONG BEEN AWARE OF, BUT NOT TO THIS EXTENT. THIRD, THE FACT THAT THEY WERE WILLING TO TALK ABOUT THIS IN FRONT OF THE AMERICAN COMMERCIAL ATTACHE ILLUSTRATED THEIR BASIC SENSE OF SECURITY, SELF-ASSURANCE, AND PRIDE IN THEIR INSTITUTIONS, AS WELL AS THE CONFIDENCE WITH WHICH THEY REGARD AMERICAN DIPLOMATS.
SPIRO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INVESTMENT LAW, FOREIGN INVESTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 05-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977YAOUND01949
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770158-0814
Format: TEL
From: YAOUNDE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770587/aaaacxuq.tel
Line Count: 108
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 62cf8a99-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 YAOUNDE 1899
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Dec-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2622547
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DINNER CONVERSATION AT AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE
TAGS: EGEN, BGEN, EINV, CM, US, (BONGWA, CHRISTIAN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/62cf8a99-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009